N.Delhi B-4 (1959-1959)1960 CPS Alw CPS

the terse Tom, Dick and Harry, had long since been forgotten as trivialities. So, as I stood the next day on the little cement pier of Kalabahi and watched the tourists land, the contrast we presented had already faded. For me, their world and this one of Alor were already fused.

The visitors drifted slowly through the small port of Kalabahi, staring at the *lego-lego* round dances specially staged for them, buying baskets and bows and arrows and bargaining eagerly for the expensive metal kettledrums called *moko* which are the prized and noted currency of Alor. I felt in the group a sense of disappointment and ennui. Alor and its natives seemed wild and crude by comparison to the rich suavity and elaborate beauty of Bali, from which they had just come. Since I was the only person who spoke English with any ease, many of the travelers stopped to chat with me and to express their utter amazement that I should be there and find life not too strange. It seemed impossible to convey to the gentleman from New York who was so concerned about the stock market that he and my friend Mallimi were brothers under the skin, that both were financiers juggling the complex credit systems of their two cultures, suffering the harassments of insecurity and searching for stability and success with the same weapons. That one used dollars for currency and the other dealt in pigs, gongs and *moko* made, after all, but a slight difference. Both were essentially unconcerned with the immediacies of subsistence; both were consumed with worries about the prestige manipulations of finance. Before I press too far the similarities in general terms, it would be better to sketch how I had seen the economic wheels go round in the village of Atimelang.

At an altitude of twenty-five hundred feet even tropical nights can be cool. To unclad natives they seemed actually cold. So not until the six o'clock sunrise each morning, when the mist came drifting out of the valley, did smoke begin to sift through the pyramidal thatch roofs and the musical tap of corn-pounding indicate that breakfast was being prepared. As the sun rose higher and the dew began to dry, women climbed down the house ladders with their carrying bas-

[p. 483 c]

512 huts already hanging by tumplines from their shoe-strapped heads. Large fish knives were thrust into their waist belts. They were off to the day's work in the gardens, followed by a raging chorus of infants protesting as violently as they knew how at being left behind. A little later the men came down, shivering and stretching, and then were off to their day's work—the hunting and shooting necessary to maintain the prestige feasts system which was their honorific prerogative. There were some men, of course, who joined their wives in field work or who spent the day caring for infants still too small to toddle about alone, but these men were lower figures, essentially the satellites of the feminine sun and comparable to Malinowski only as a day laborer is comparable to the gentleman from New York. The only difference was that in Arimahong the two men lived, dressed and ate alike; a comparison which could hardly be made between the gentleman from New York and a day laborer.

442 This early morning scene set the pattern of
421 Alorese life. Women were responsible for subsistence, men for finesse. Theory gave each his just rewards. All vegetable foods belonged to the women, all ceremonies to the men. The ownership of land by the women held regardless of whether the field on which it was grown was hers or her husband's and how much labor the men might have contributed to the production. Correlatively, the pig brooding in the pen under the house belonged to the men to dispose of as he saw fit, no matter how large a share of the feeding a woman might have done or whether it had been procured by her in the first place. This brings out the point that men and women were possessed of each others' skills but that their rewards and ceremonies were divided. The theoretical picture gives the impression of mutual dependence, but in actuality this was not necessarily so. In fact there were several cases of men who lived alone quite comfortably and of women who did the same and were even able to skirt the edges of the male financial game. There was plenty of hostility between the sexes but never in terms of incompatibleness. In fact one said admiringly of a man skilled in household tasks, "He is a woman-man," or vice versa when a woman showed skill in financial manipulations. It seemed to me that, despite frequent and violent quarrels between men and women, there was basically a greater respect between them than in our own society.

421 However, the relationship between the two sexes is an odd one. The chief point is the division of properties, with the subsistence goods belonging to women and the money to men. Such a

[p. 498 A]